that the world heaped upon them were all in the future, and Madame Curie had no premonition of the laurels that were coming and when they came the Curies were modest, almost resentful of the attention that was heaped on them.

Radium was found to have the value in medicine of the X-rays. It was discovered that it was the most certain test for diamonds, that it would burn the skin through a metal box, and all sorts of insulation; that the rays of emanation were of a gaseous nature, like helium gas, which could be bottled; that they penetrated any substance, and gave any substance the qualities of radium, but at that time the quantity of radium in the world was infinitesimal; it had not been isolated, and the scientists had not learned enough of it to bring its properties into juxtaposition to their time-honoured principles. Still, it was interesting, wonderfully fascinating, and Professor Curie was asked to lecture on its properties before the Sorbonne.

Now Honours Come Quickly.

After the lecture honours came rapidly. The fact that it cost over £400,000 to produce a pound of radium from 2500 tons of pitchblende deterred the poor chemistry instructor from putting great quantities of it before scientific bodies for their study. The announcement that there was more gold in seawater than radium in pitchblende led the general public to believe that it was such a rare and unattainable substance that it would never be of much practical service. They did not know how little of it would work miracles, and how little it would take to set the scientists to revising their chemical axioms.

In 1905 the Royal Society of Great Britain presented the Curies with medals of recognition, and Professor Curie was given a chair in the Sorbonne.

In 1906 a blow fell on the Curie household. The professor was riding his bicycle, and was run over and carried home dead. Madame Curie, the impassive woman of science, made no demonstration. She shed no tears, but silently prepared for the obsequies, attended by her two little children, and in every way in her grief was the same modest, quiet little woman she had been in her scientific triumph. After the funeral she was offered her husband's chair in the faculty of the University of the Sorbonne, while other honours were proferred her. As she had consistently refused all honours previously, all France half suspected she would refuse it, though no woman had ever been offered a place in the faculty of a University before. It was an unprecedented honour, and after much persuasion she accepted it. Thousands of people attended to hear her first lecture, and were surprised to see an emaciated little woman, with a portentious brow, but not the slightest symptom of Parisian "chic" in her appearance. She is not beautiful. Hers is a plain Polish face, with the high cheek bones and round chin, and the only feature that impresses one is the high, rounded forehead.

One woman only had ever occupied the position which Madame Curie had occupied, and she did not hold it officially. That woman was Novella, the beautiful daughter of Jean d'Andree, of the Bologna University. When Jean was ill his daughter lectured eloquently on canonic law, but Petrarch and some other youthful students paid so much attention to the fair face that they failed to take notes, so the city fathers forced her to lecture behind a curtain.

First a Mother—a Scientist Afterwards.

Madame Curie is not a sensationalist, however, either in appearance or manner. Her modesty is the first thing that impresses you, and her simplicity the second. She is a mother of two children, and a mother primarily. Secondarily, she is a scientist, and, last of all, a lecturer. She has been the chief experimenter in a field which has forced the chemists to put a question mark at the end of their long catalogue of elements, and has led many of them to consider the proto-atomic theory, that is the theory that all matter is essentially one, and that the division into elements is simply an arbitrary convenience, not based upon chemical fact. For does not radium emanate light which penetrates objects which light has never penetrated? And does not this emanation appear to have an actual corpuscular character, as if it were made up of fine particles thrown off from the body of the metal? All this is opposed to the vibratory theory of light, which has long been in good scientific standing and takes science back to the days of Newton, the physicist, who pronounced the corpuscular theories of light.

Madame Curie is the woman who has erected a turning post at which science in its progress must stop and consider whether it is on the right road or not. Her intuition about the character of pitchblende has grown into a great question mark, which now materialises in tantalising fashion before the men who have been working out theories—books of them—on basic principles of which none of them is certain, since radium remains inexplicable.

Madame Curie means much to France and to science at large. And yet she is only a woman!—*Exchange.*

News of the Unions.

[The Editor cannot promise to insert anything in the next issue that does not reach her by the 8th of the month. Correspondents are requested to write their Reports as concisely as possible, on one side of the paper only. Newspaper cuttings are unsuitable.]

AUCKLAND.

December 13, annual meeting. Officers elected:—President, Mrs Dewar; Vice-Presidents, Mesdames Thorpe and Pudney and Miss Dewar; Treasurer, Mrs Hughes; Corresponding Secretary, Miss N. Dewar; Recording Secretary, Miss Evans. Reports were received and Misses Dewar and Evans were appointed Delegates to Convention.

NGARUAWAHIA.

Third annual report:—Twelve meetings were held in the Presbyterian Church and three special in the Town Hall, whilst a social afternoon was held at the dwelling of Mrs Williams. These meetings were all presided over by the President, Mrs Bycroft, who was ably assisted in the work by Miss Linda Kay.

The roll now numbers 26, all of whom are real "live" members. At the local option poll taken recently the result was—No License 262, Continuance 206, giving a majority of 56 for No License. By the efforts of the Union £15 was raised to augment the funds of the No License League.

During the year a visit was paid to Te Kowhai to see if it be advisable to form a Union there. There are many earnest temperance workers in that district. The Union wish to place on record the good work done by our District President, Mrs Auld, Miss McNeish, and the Maori Organizer, Miss Rebecca Smith.